

# AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND AMERICAN ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT IN 1960'S INSIDE THE BEATLES AND JOHN LENNON'S SONG'S LYRICS

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## Abstract

This research explains about the condition of American society in 1960's who are portrayed civil right movement and anti-war movement that can be seen inside The Beatles and John Lennon songs. The aim of this research is how figures of speech used in The Beatles and John Lennon's songs able to portray American civil right movement and American anti-war in 1960's inside the songs lyrics. The theory of figurative language that used is by Griffith and Wales who explain the figures of speech into symbolism, paradox, pleonasm, personification, repetition, hyperbole, metonymy and irony. In the writing process of this research, the researcher applied library research. In addition, the researcher used descriptive qualitative method as the research design. The researcher used the songs album compilation by The Beatles and John Lennon's. Those song's lyrics as the data source; meanwhile the data are the lyrics in the songs. As the result of this analysis that based on the figures of speech use, the researcher concluded that The Beatles and John Lennon's song's lyrics portrayed several conflicts happened, in which the purpose is to solve and abolish segregation, inequality, disparity, war and all of bad situation to be a better world, to have a similarity in the rights between black people (Afro-American) and white people, live in peace under the unity of world peace.

**Key words:** American Society, Civil Rights, Songs Lyric.

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## INTRODUCTION

Many people in the world love music. Music can embrace people without concerning their status. Music lovers have their own choice in every kind of music, whether it is jazz, rock n roll, pop, folk, reggae, etc. Music is the universal language which through the music we can describe many things that we want to say about the condition around us or about some condition which had happened in the past and what we call as history (Lennon, 2008). Music ranges about peace, love story, life, faith, struggle, world history such as world reconciliation movements and civil right movements (Tanenhaus et al., 2000). Music also takes part in the progress of an era, the presence and the existence can affect the mindsets and attitudes ((Sinaga & Pustika, 2021), (Mandasari & Aminatun, 2019), (Puspita & Pranoto, 2021)) of the society especially for young people (Pustika, 2021). Various genres (Kardiansyah, 2019) of music that was introduced to music lovers or the listener especially music and lyrics which are became one and produce a good composition (Chavez, 2000). It

can be used as message and communication media ((Tiono & Sylvia, 2004), (Lubis et al., 2019), (Febriantini et al., 2021)) because civil rights movements take a part in changes of musical form, tone, instrumentation, and production style ((Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020a), (Dosia & Rido, 2017)) and eventually changes in lyrics content that reflected in social political changes (KUSWOYO et al., 2013).

Song as the thing to complete the words (Pranoto & Afrilita, 2019) or lyrics became more interesting to interpret the lyrics and meaning ((Kuswoyo et al., n.d.), (Putra & Qodriani, 2017)), the composer uses the word with different stylistic in a particular way in order to beautify the word, more vivid and to be nice enough to be listened by the hearer. Song's lyric can be as the description of the songresearcher's expression to devote the feeling, thought and willingness (Pranoto & Suprayogi, 2020). Therefore, lyric can be as a form to convey a message in communication. To understand the song's lyric, people have to determine the speaker's intention ((Saifuddin Dahlan, 2013), (Anuar et al., 2020)), which sometimes the composer uses figurative language on the song (Yunara & Kardiansyah, 2017), so the listener is not only able to enjoy the melody of the song but also get the knowledge or the meaning from the song's lyrics (Kuswoyo, 2013).

There are many bands exist in every music production and The Beatles is not the only band that is fresh and full of energy, they are very skillful in playing music but so are other bands. Their single changed the period that known as the sixties and their influence is still being felt until today. <sup>1</sup> From this statement, it can be seen that The Beatles as a rock and roll group which has more influence on generations in the world in 1964 until 1970 than another band where The Beatles is seen as the embodiment of progressive ideas and its influences to the socio-cultural revolution of the 1960's.

The Beatles and John Lennon have songs that related to the history behind the independence or the victory of American society in 1960's which are very concerned by the title and purpose of this analysis. This is the reason why the researcher chooses The Beatles and John Lennon's songs as the matter to be analyzed in this research. So, the researcher chooses songs to explain and correlate the purpose of this analysis; The Beatles White Album *Blackbird* (22<sup>st</sup> November 1968), *Revolution 1* (22<sup>st</sup> November 1968), and two song's that was released after Lennon's decided to separate from The Beatles and choose to active in anti-war socialist, there are *Give Peace a Chance* (11<sup>st</sup> October 1971) and *Imagine* (4<sup>st</sup> July 1969).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **American Civil Right Movement in 1960's**

Civil rights movement is a social movement of African - American to get right and equality. When talking about American civil right movement in 1960's the major issue in that era really talking about American that focus on African – American. Since 1919's – 1960's black people or African – American was trapped in the injustice of human right, and in the beginning of 1960's among younger African – Americans could not wait for change (Qodriani & Wijana, 2020), this is the climax of African – American younger together to join demonstrated and Montgomery Bus Boycott. The demonstrate was lead by Martin Luther King, Jr. as African – American who became the most important leaders in the history of non-violence in modern times.

National Humanities Center there are some movement which are focus on African and Afro – American, likes the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), *the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)*, *the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)*, and *the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)*. From those movements means that, the movement started to encourage civil disobedience around the country to protest against segregation and the violation of civil rights, they were especially vocal about Women's Right movement and people having the right to vote.

### **American Anti-War Movement 1960's**

American anti-war movement began in the U.S. with demonstrations in 1964. "Anti-War movement is social movements are collectivities acting in an organized way, outside, outside of institutional channels, to challenge or defend existing authority and policy." From this statement, society can determine their right to make a new community to defend their fate for a better life, and live in love and peace in togetherness, to challenge and defend existing authority of Government policy to incarnate same purpose of peace world without war, violence (Evayani & Rido, 2019), hardness and conflict, never acceptable violent conflict and oppose all war.

In New York, over a million people took part in one demonstration. The public opinion polls showed that a narrow majority of the people still supported US involvement in Vietnam. However, the polls also indicated that much of this support came from middle class families whose own sons were not at risk. (*Spartacus Educational*). Anti-war

movement is an act of many young man refuse to register for the draft and refused to be inducted if called. "The goals was to informing the American public of the true nature of the war and stopping the America military from being able to wage the war." It means that to reach their goals, they are used their diverse tactics such as demonstrations, grassroots organizing, congressional lobbying, electoral challenges, civil disobedience, draft resistance, self-immolation, occupation of university and Government buildings, etc.

### **Figurative Language**

Language is a part of literature that it cannot be separated with literature ((Lestari & Wahyudin, 2020), (Rido, 2011), (Kuswoyo, n.d.)). By using language, we can explore our thought, feeling or our imagination. By using figurative language, literary work is more vivid ((Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020b), (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020a)) and it can practice the reader to use their imagination and to get the meaning of figurative language is language that uses implicit meaning in the sentence of literary work ((Lennon, 2008), (Suprayogi & Novanti, 2021)). The function of figurative language in a literary work is to force the readers to do an act of imagining, readers must explore the interconnection between words to words or sentence by sentence to fully understand the essence of the expression. Many kinds of figurative language that often appear in literary work such as simile, metaphor, paradox (Kardiansyah, n.d.), hyperbole, personification, irony, etc. Not only in literature that figurative languages can be founded but also in daily life we often hear some people speak by using that language.

### **METHOD**

Research is a scientific inquiry aimed at learning new facts, testing ideas, etc. It is the systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data to generate new knowledge and answer a certain question or solve a problem. In this research, the researcher uses some data and applies descriptive qualitative method to give the explanation and elaborate which related with the analysis. This research was conducted by library research because library makes information available wherever and whenever the user requires it, and seeks to ensure that barriers to use and reuse are removed. Data source of this research are taken from songs album compilation by The Beatles and John Lennon's which contained a lot of songs with certain themes inside, for example like love and live story (Pratiwi et al., 2020), peace, freedom, sexuality and also world peace concerned to the social, political issues and

reconciliation movement. Moreover, by considering the analysis discussion, the researcher tried to limit the songs with the theme of world peace. Therefore, the selected song's lyrics which become the data are *Blackbird* (22<sup>st</sup> November 1968), *Revolution 1* (22<sup>st</sup> November 1968), *Give Peace a Chance* (11<sup>st</sup> October 1971) and *Imagine* (4<sup>st</sup> July 1969). The data of this research are word, line, stanza, phrase and figurative language elements inside The Beatles and John Lennon's song's lyrics.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **American Civil Right Movement in 1960's Inside the Beatles and John Lennon's Song Lyrics**

In analyzing American civil rights movement in 1960's inside The Beatles and John Lennon's song's lyrics, the researcher focused on two songs, there are *Blackbird* and *Give Peace a Chance* as the most influential songs in 1960's which are related with the respect of revolutionary in the nineteen sixties and story about race riots, civil rights movements as reaction to racial tensions escalating, are mentioned as follow:

#### **Blackbird**

This is the song entitled *Blackbird*. This song is one of the Beatles songs that were written by Paul McCartney as one of member of the Beatles. Paul McCartney wrote this song about American that focus on African – American, the civil rights struggle for blacks, about race riots in the United States, when the federal courts forced the racial desegregation, and when Afro-American movement joint demonstrated and expressed their right to get an equality, and racial desegregation in 1960's. Paul's tries to open the history of Afro - American in 1960's toward his song, so the listener can back and remember about the history of American before they life together and separated by race, color, religion, social class, etc and Martin Luther King, Jr. as the leader of American civil right movement was successes to bring Afro – American can live together until now. And by this song Paul's using some figurative language to more describes the purpose and the meaning inside this lyric became more interest and meaningful. Moreover in this song, the researcher found some figures of speech; they are personification, hyperbole, pleonasm, repetition and paradox.

#### **Give Peace a Chance**

This is the song entitled *Give peace a Chance*. This song is regarded as an anthem of the American anti war movement during the 1970's that was released in 7<sup>st</sup> July 1969. This

song reflects Lennon's views on the political issue of war and Vietnam War and as American actions were against the United States involvement in the Vietnam War. And not only that, Civil Rights movement in 1960's can be seen inside this song's lyrics. It is about the climax where people come together and express their desires that they want to say is get a peace. In the middle of a Government's ideology and programs which allows bringing change, but the big hope that the society wants which are peace and equal rights without any distinction of race and class.

### **American Anti War Movement in 1960's Inside the Beatles and John**

#### **Lennon's Song Lyrics**

In analyzing American anti war movement in 1960's inside The Beatles and John Lennon's song's lyrics, the researcher focused on three songs as the most influential songs in 1960's which are related with political protest song in early 1968's and as doubt expressed about some of the Government tactics and as the protest of American anti war toward Vietnam war. The other songs are the anthem of American anti war movement and to encourage the listener to imagine to life in a peace world without war.

#### **Give Peace a Chance**

The 1960's were a time of great political and social turmoil for the United States. The fear of communism had pushed the U.S. into an unsuccessful offensive war in Vietnam. Many people died and Americans were frustrated that their Government was not letting out the war. This is the song entitled Give peace a Chance. This song is regarded as an anthem of the American anti war movement during the 1970's that was released in 7<sup>st</sup> July 1969. This song reflects Lennon's views on the political issue of war and Vietnam War and as American actions were against the United States involvement in the Vietnam War, as the protest that all of citizens especially for American youths able to choose and to clearly denounce or rejected the war, because they fighting for their life, their fate as youth and new generation of America. American anti-war movement began in the U.S. with demonstrations in 1964, as a social movements are collectivities acting in an organized way, outside, outside of institutional channels, to challenge or defend existing authority and policy and to incarnate same purpose of peace world without war, violence, hardness and conflict, never acceptable violent conflict and oppose all war. Moreover, in this song the researcher found some figures of speech, they are repetition and metonymy.

### **CONCLUSION**

After solving the problems that are analyzed in this research and comprehending the data and the main analysis, the conclusion is directly drawn in this chapter. The analysis of figurative language in the previous chapter mainly concerned to the figure of speech of symbolism, paradox, pleonasm, personification, repetition, hyperbole, metonymy and irony which are reflected in the Beatles and John Lennon's song's lyrics. Furthermore, in the whole of meaning interpretation which have been analyzed by the researcher and by using theory of figurative language, the researcher found that all selected songs have the meaning that describe about a severe condition of several conflicts happened in American civil rights movement and American anti-war movement in 1960's inside The Beatles and John Lennon's songs where the impact of these events are influences all of Americans. In which those meaning portrayed in all songs have the same purpose to solve and abolish segregation, inequality, disparity, war and all of bad situation to be a better world, to have a similarity in the rights between black people (Afro-American) and white people, freedom and live in peace under the unity of world peace.

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